

UK Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group

MINUTES

1st Meeting - English Nature Offices, Devon House London

28 July 2003 11h00 - 15h00

Present

Alan McKirdy

Ant Maddock

Deryck Steer

Gwyn Williams

Jim Munford

Joanna Drewitt

John Robbins

Liz Howe (teleconference)

Mike Meharg

Paul Rose

Pete Brotherton

Apologies

Sarah Ruff

Trish Fretten

1. Welcome

Deryck Steer welcomed everybody to the first meeting of BRIG. Sarah Ruff (WILDLIFE COUNTRYSIDE LINK) was unable to attend this meeting but would ensure that a representative attended future meetings.

Deryck Steer stated that he wanted to focus on the short-term issues as a matter of priority and to hold the long-term objectives for future action.

2. Background to the establishment of the Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group.

The good work of the now disbanded Biodiversity Information Group (BIG) and Targets Group was acknowledged. Several lessons learnt from the work of the former groups were identified as important for BRIG. These were the need to ensure clear lines of accountability and authority and the need to have a well-defined work plan focussed on areas where it matters.

3. Status and Terms of Reference

3.1 Name of Group – Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group was agreed

3.2 Terms of Reference – The Standing Committee have given BRIG a broad Terms of Reference as a starting point. BRIG wanted to build on this and, subject to approval from the Standing Committee, amend it as required. At present, the Terms of Reference also contain a very short work plan that BRIG wished to separate and further develop independently.

ACTION 1: EMAIL APRIL STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES TO LIZ HOWE.

- 3.3 Membership – LBAPs were represented through Country Group representatives but may need to be brought into BRIG or the 2005 Reporting Group.
- 3.4 Way of working – BRIG to work through time-limited working groups using emails to maintain communication and keep members up to date. The role of BRIG would be to consider main issues raised by working groups and set a brief for working groups to follow.
- 3.5 The aim of BRIG as listed in the ToR did not include the words “reporting” and “information” which were an important part of the work of the group. Some concern was expressed that such specific reference could unduly narrow the remit of the group. In addition, the word information is wider than suggested in the Terms of Reference and needs to reflect openness, transparency and the freedom of information. Perhaps a catch all phrase could be used to reflect that all information would be made freely available.
- In the objectives section, maintenance of targets and plans had not been identified; this was an omission, when the target review had been identified in the draft work plan.
- The results from reporting rounds need to be taken a step further through an objective to provide feedback to actions and complete the loop.
- ACTION 2:** PAUL ROSE AND GWYN WILLIAMS TO AMMEND THE TERMS OF REFERENCE, ACCORDING TO SUGGESTIONS MADE, AND EMAIL TO GROUP FOR APPROVAL OR FURTHER COMMENT.

4. Draft work plan

Reporting rounds

4.1 The assessment of the 2002 reporting round.

Deryck Steer proposed a one-off meeting (Paul Rose, Gwyn Williams, Deryck Steer, and Pete Brotherton) to prepare a paper assessing the 2002 report, and identifying if further analysis might be done to identify (i) implications for cross-cutting policy development (e.g. agriculture/forestry/water), and (ii) for the UKBAP process itself (e.g. survey and monitoring needs), for the Standing Committee to take a view on whether this would be helpful to the Country Groups and, if so, whether this was best generated by BRIG or through the Country Groups themselves.

ACTION 3: DERYCK STEER TO CONVENE MEETING BY END AUGUST; PAPER TO BE COMPLETED BY 14 SEPTEMBER 2003 FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2003.

4.2 Plan and design the process for reporting in 2005.

The 2005 Reporting Working Group comprising Robin Wynde (Chair), Pete Brotherton, John Robbins, Alan McKirdy, A.N. Other (Northern Ireland), LBAP, Wales, Ant Maddock, was set up to carry this task forward. The Group could also co-opt other members if appropriate. The approach taken for the 2002 reporting round provided a basis for 2005; there was scope for developing LBAP reporting. It was suggested reporting should be extended beyond that for SAPs, HAPs and

LBAPs. It was concluded that this was desirable, but complicated by the fact that planning and implementation of cross-cutting policy issues was now a devolved matter that was probably best described in the country strategies, which themselves were at various stages of development and implementation in the four countries. Confirmation would be needed as to whether BRIG has a role in this: data for 2005 could be summarised from reports prepared by the Country Groups, or BRIG may have a deeper role. A brief was drafted that asks the group to consider:

- HAPS, SAPS, LBAPs
- Cross-cutting/wider issues, (country groups)
- Review of reporting
- Consider other reporting streams
- Packaging the report
- Sign off
- How to deal with the reviews of species, habitats and targets
- Timetable (by December 2003)

ACTION 4: LIZ HOWE AND TRISH FRETTON TO NOMINATE A WELSH REPRESENTATIVE

ACTION 5: MIKE MEHARG WAS TO NOMINATE A NORTHERN IRELAND REPRESENTATIVE. MIKE SUBSEQUENTLY REPORTED THAT HE WOULD ASSUME ROLE.

ACTION 6: SCOPING REPORT OF THE WORK TO BE DONE BY THIS GROUP TO BE PREPARED BY 14 SEPTEMBER 2003 IN TIME FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING.

4.3 Agree criteria and the process for reviewing priority species and habitats, and co-ordinate and implement the review.

The Species and Habitat Review Working Group comprising Joanna Drewitt (Chair), Deb Procter, Liz Howe, Pete Brotherton, Ant Maddock, LINK(X2), John Baxter, DEFRA (BPU) was set up.

ACTION 7: SECRETARIAT TO INVITE DEB PROCTER AND JOHN BAXTER TO JOIN THIS GROUP.

ACTION 8: GWYN WILLIAMS TO INVITE WILDLIFE COUNTRYSIDE LINK TO NOMINATE TWO REPRESENTATIVES TO JOIN THIS GROUP.

ACTION 9: JOHN ROBBINS TO CONSULT ON A SUITABLE DEFRA REPRESENTATIVE TO JOIN THIS GROUP.

ACTION 10: DERYCK STEER TO CLARIFY THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE GIVEN THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING ARE A LITTLE AMBIGUOUS ON THIS ISSUE.

ACTION 11: BRIG TO PRESENT OPTIONS FOR CHANGES TO HAPS AND SAPS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON 29 SEPTEMBER.

4.4 Review of UK BAP targets for 2005.

BRIG agreed that:

- The existing targets were not to be changed for 2005 reporting round unless it had been shown to be absolutely necessary through 2002 reporting. Reporting in 2005 needed to reflect the targets in place for the 2002-5 period, and a comprehensive target review could not be completed in the available time.
- A process for reviewing the targets needed to be set up.
- Countrification of the targets was necessary.
- It was important that people who implemented the targets were given the opportunity to be involved with the process of review. Lead Partners and Agencies together with their respective Steering Groups were best placed technically to propose revised targets, but Country Groups needed to consider and approve target revisions given their resource implications (especially for HAPs).
- Sarah Ruff volunteered to be on any target working groups that were established.

ACTION 12: GWYN WILLIAMS AND PETE BROTHERTON TO DEVELOP AN OUTLINE FOR THE POSSIBLE PROCESS BASED ON THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE 2001 TARGETS REVIEW FOR PRESENTATION TO THE NEXT STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING.

ACTION 13: SUBJECT TO VIEWS OF STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS WOULD REVIEW THE OUTLINE AT ITS NEXT MEETING IN SEPTEMBER 2003.

Information provision and links between Lead Partners and Local Biodiversity Action Plans

4.5 Maintain an overview of the information requirements of the UK BAP. Develop a process to plan how information is provided

4.6 Maintain the UK BAP web site as the main delivery mechanism for BRIG activities

4.7 Assist UK BAP implementation through the development of processes to improve links between local and UK action plans

4.8 Build capacity of website for Lead Partners and LBAPs to develop guidance using best practice, case studies and examples

Items 4.5 to 4.8 were part of Ant Maddock's work programme in JNCC that involved communicating information to the UK BAP Partnership through better access to existing information on the UK BAP website and provision of new information identified by users.

ACTION 14: MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO PROVIDE ANT MADDOCK WITH IDEAS ABOUT INFORMATION PROVISION, ADVICE AND FEEDBACK ON WEB DEVELOPMENTS.

ACTION 15: BIS WAS ASKED TO PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF THE QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS SEND TO THE WEBSITE.

General items

- 4.9 Structure of UK BAP. Not considered in detail.
- 4.10 Review of recommendations arising from the UK Partnership meeting in Perth. This was discussed under item 4.1
- 4.11 Provide advice and guidance on focus and activities of UK Biodiversity Indicators Forum**
BRIG needs a report on the information that has been gathered on indicators.
ACTION 16: DERYCK STEER TO SPEAK TO JOHN CUSTANCE ABOUT THE BIODIVERSITY INDICATORS FORUM
ACTION 17: BRIG TO SORT OUT THE RELATIONSHIP IT IS TO HAVE WITH THE BIODIVERSITY INDICATORS FORUM
- 4.12 Assist the UK Biodiversity Research Advisory Group identify research requirements. Paul Rose will be the link between BRAG and BRIG.
ACTION 18: EMAIL BRAG'S ToR TO MEMEMBERS
- 4.13 Provide guidance on survey and monitoring **
ACTION 19: THIS ITEM TO BE CARRIED OVER TO THE NEXT BRIG MEETING
- 4.14 Reporting on policy level conservation work e.g. Agri-environment schemes. This is part of the brief of the 2005 Reporting Group and was covered in item 4.2.
- 4.15 Using BARS in 2005. This is part of the brief of the 2005 Reporting Group and was covered in item 4.2.
- 4.16 Possible work of time-limited working groups
The following groups were set up:
- 2005 Reporting Group
 - Species and Habitat Priorities Review Group

5. Next meetings

- 6.1 The following standing items would be included in all subsequent BRIG meetings
- Report back from country groups looking at big issues and any problems – 5 minutes
 - BRAG
 - Indicators
 - NBN

* These are listed on the Agenda because they were included in the work programme attached to the Terms of Reference. We will discuss what needs to be done about these issues.

6.2 Circulation of BRIG meetings to different locations. It was agreed that meetings would be alternated between London and Edinburgh.

6.3 Next Standing Committee meeting (29 September 2003; deadline for papers 14 September 2003)

6.4 Date and venue of next BRIG meeting(s). The next meeting will be held after the Standing Committee meeting.

ACTION 20: UPON RECEIPT OF THESE DRAFT MINUTES, MEMBERS TO SEND 10 DATES IN OCTOBER ON WHICH THEY CAN ATTEND THE NEXT BRIG MEETING.